

Threatened and Endangered Species in Forests of Wisconsin

This publication was produced in 2000 as
a joint project of:

Wisconsin Department of Natural
Resources - Division of Forestry and the
Bureau of Endangered Resources,
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service,
The Nature Conservancy,
International Paper,
Stora Enso and
Plum Creek.

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and reference publication number FR-174



DWARF LAKE IRIS

(*Iris lacustris*)

Federal Status: Threatened

State Status: Threatened



Description: The dwarf lake iris blossoms from early May through the beginning of June. The large flowers of this iris, 3 inches in diameter, are dark blue to purple, with bright yellow crests that decorate the three main petals. The flat, parallel-veined leaves are arranged in fans and grow to about 6 inches in height. This plant often grows in colonies.

Habitat: This beautiful, diminutive iris may be found along the northern shores of the Great Lakes. The dwarf lake iris thrives in the cool, moist air blowing off the Great Lakes. It prefers



the thin, moist, sandy or rocky soil near the shores, and the partial shade of the northern forests. It is often associated with white cedar, paper birch and balsam fir.

Forestry Considerations: Care should be taken not to destroy colonies of the dwarf lake iris because it reproduces primarily vegetatively. Although the plant readily flowers and occasionally sets seed, it rarely sprouts from seed. Because the iris needs just the right combination of sun and shade to grow, major habitat modification should be avoided. Selective harvest techniques that create a mixture of sunny and shady areas are ideal. Wintertime logging is preferred. The use of insecticides and herbicides should be restricted within 100 feet of iris colonies.

